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THE EIGHTH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF APPLIED CHEMISTRY

THE history of the origin and development of the international congresses of applied chemistry has, fortunately, been the theme of the chairman's address this evening. The living chain which has connected these congresses has been the distinguished scientists who have filled the offices of honorary and acting president and one other—Dr. Strohmer, of Vienna. This has provided sufficient cohesion and has resulted in congresses of steadily increasing importance, although the rules are few and simple and the membership of each congress terminates with the congress itself. The seventh, held in London during June of last year, was the largest in point of attendance. While the hospitality showered upon the delegates by public officials and private friends was exceedingly lavish, the actual scientific work of the congress was very important, as will be seen when the transactions have been published and distributed.

While chemical science is progressing in all directions with extreme rapidity, there is little doubt in my mind that the holding of these congresses as frequently as every three years is unwise. I hope the eighth congress will decide to change the period of holding future congresses so that the interval will be five years. The labor connected with the preparation and holding of the congresses and subsequent editing and production of the volumes of transactions is enormous, and the expense is very considerable for such moderately rewarded men as most chemists unfortunately are. I am glad to say that our German friends

took action to this effect in the spring, and that Sir William Ramsay, president of the seventh congress, advises me that he is of the same mind.

As far as I know, the first suggestion that the eighth congress should be held in this country originated with the chairman of this section. It was followed by a meeting of fifteen or twenty gentlemen at a dinner of which he was the host, when the topic of discussion was the practicability of holding a successful congress in this country. A temporary organization was formed and several meetings were held. Letters were written to many colleges and individuals all over the United States, and the replies were so uniformly encouraging that the conclusion was reached to invite the congress to meet here in 1912. In order that the invitation should be as attractive as possible, the congress of the United States passed a bill instructing the Secretary of State to take the necessary steps to give official sanction to the invitation. This was done, thereby making the Eighth Congress of Applied Chemistry notable in at least one respect, namely, it is the only one which has received an official invitation from any government. This invitation was graciously extended by his excellency the American ambassador at the Court of St. James's and cordially seconded by the chairman of the American committee of the seventh congress. It was unanimously accepted by that great assembly of chemists from all quarters of the globe with an enthusiasm which was very gratifying.

For honorary president of the eighth congress was elected an honorary member of the American Chemical Society. The active president elected is a charter member of that society who had been deputed to represent it at the seventh congress. I allude especially to these facts, as they

have a distinct bearing on the responsibility resting upon every one of the 5,100 members of this society to make the affair a signal success.

The official invitation of the United States would also seem to make it imperative that our visiting friends should be shown as much of the country itself and its resources as can be properly done in the limited time available. This official invitation also makes every citizen of the country, whether chemist or not, more or less responsible for the hospitable reception of our visiting friends. I think that a program arranged with a view to accomplish this study of our resources, rather than a fatiguing list of entertainments in one or two cities, would meet with approval everywhere and bring a far greater number from abroad; in other words, the most signal way of showing our hospitality will be to make our visitors acquainted, as far as possible, with our resources and what we have done with them. This will be educational all around, and may lead to some surprises for ourselves. It will certainly be of untold value to this country to have our work reviewed by such a distinguished gathering of men whose view points will be so different from our own. I am sure that in the end our modesty will have increased, while we shall be able to attack with greater intelligence problems which are constantly becoming more complex. For instance, we should certainly learn from those living where conservation of natural resources has of necessity received scientific consideration for a century how to begin intelligently to stop our own fearful wastes. Necessity is a good though stern teacher. Let us learn from those who have been to her school while the opportunity to do so will be so favorable.

The seventh congress appointed as a committee to form the eighth the thirteen

gentlemen appointed by the Secretary of State to represent this country at that congress, with instructions to add to their number. A considerable delay elapsed before any active steps were taken, but at the first meeting of this committee its number was increased somewhat, so that the work of making the complete committee could be more intelligently performed. This somewhat enlarged committee has held one meeting, and its principal work has been to complete as far as possible the joint organizing committee of nearly two hundred which is to meet on October 8 at the Chemists' Club for the first important formal work of the congress.

No additional officers have been elected except the secretary, so that at that meeting no one will find affairs cut and dried and the offices allotted. Its principal business will be the election of the treasurer of the congress and the president and vice-presidents of the numerous sections, upon whom so much will depend. An executive committee will also have to be chosen.

In order that no chemist of prominence should be lost sight of in this matter, careful steps have been taken, by correspondence with all the members of the organization, to provide two or three candidates for every office, so that the members will have a free and full opportunity of expressing their will. In a democratic country like this, where so much depends upon the feeling of responsibility which each member of the committee will carry, it is of the utmost importance that every one should consider himself responsible for the successful outcome of the congress, and be placed in a position in which he would have no excuse for shirking his duties.

As a result of communication with forty-four chemical societies in various parts of the world, as well as with many of our own people living at a distance, the meeting of

the committee as first enlarged determined to hold the congress during the early part of September, 1912, and that its opening session should be in the city of Washington and its active sectional work in the city of New York.

The selection of Washington for the opening meetings was entirely natural when we consider that the invitation has been a national one. It will also be much more convenient for the president of the United States and other high officials who, it is hoped, will take prominent part. This will give an exceptionally favorable opportunity for our guests to see our beautiful capital under the most favorable auspices.

New York, as a manufacturing center, with its hotel accommodations and other facilities, is ideal as a place for carrying on the sectional work and occasional large meetings of such a congress; and if we are not too strenuous in our hospitality a week should see that part of the work well on towards completion. This will permit visitors to see other portions of the country with the view alluded to above of showing, as far as possible, the resources of the country to our foreign guests.

Even to those who have not attended previous sessions, it will be plain from the above brief outline that the work of properly organizing the congress, securing suitable papers for its consideration, providing discussions on same, arranging for hospitality, transportation and all the thousand and one matters which come up on such occasions will be no child's play. It will require the work of hundreds of men and the loyal support not only of every chemist in the country, but of every college and every business concern which has to do with chemists in any capacity. The financial question alone is one of very great importance, especially in view of the fact that when the new Chemists' Club is fin-

ished it will contain fire-proof apartments for the great reference library which it is hoped will be collected, and to which I trust any surplus arising from the expenses of the congress will be devoted.

The congress will be upon us in less than two years. All of these preparations will have to be made in the meantime, and the officers and committee of the congress are looking with entire confidence to the membership of this society for such active and earnest support as will make the eighth congress greater than any which has preceded it.

WILLIAM H. NICHOLS

*THE AMERICAN CHEMICAL SOCIETY AND
THE EIGHTH INTERNATIONAL CON-
GRESS OF APPLIED CHEMISTRY*

FIRST of all permit me to present the thought to your minds that the utility of the eighth International Congress of Applied Chemistry will be judged, determined and measured largely by the printed record of its deliberations and conclusions. The position that the eighth congress will occupy in the series of international congresses will also be judged largely by that printed record.

It is essential that the printed record shall truthfully and accurately reflect the activities of the eighth congress.

That these activities of the congress shall properly and completely represent the then condition of applied chemistry over the whole world is perhaps the main task of the eighth congress.

That the then conditions of applied chemistry in the United States be correctly reflected and portrayed in those activities must be the object of particular solicitude on the part of all American chemists and in particular of the American Chemical Society and that this may be accomplished it is necessary that everything pertaining

to applied chemistry in the United States which can be properly reported at that congress should be so reported.

The American Chemical Society and all of its sections and divisions should therefore assist greatly in making the eighth congress a proper measure of the condition of applied chemistry in the United States in 1912. It can also assist materially in the making up of the printed record, which is to present in permanent form for use and for reference the activities of this congress, so that these may be properly recorded and one of the principal objects of the eighth congress may be achieved.

The American Chemical Society, through its executive officers, has already taken great interest in the advancement of the congress, and they have cheerfully given valuable help. The American Chemical Society with its membership of more than fifty-one hundred members, its nine divisions and its thirty-four local sections constitutes a most powerful instrument by means of which American chemists can get hold of much, if not all, of the material which is properly presented to such a congress. If the local sections and if the divisions of the American Chemical Society and all of their members will make it a special point to search through their respective divisions and their respective sections for material whose communication to the congress would aid in bringing before that congress a correct idea of what the chemists of the United States are doing for the furtherance of applied chemistry, not in general terms, but in as concrete statements as conditions will permit, then the American Chemical Society can feel that whatever that printed record may show it certainly and correctly reflects the then status of applied chemistry in the United States. In this manner effective means will have been used fully to represent all